




Technical Bulletin #68:

Concepts and Principles of Watershed Management

Watersheds – A Hierarchy of Multiple Scales

Watersheds can vary in size from the micro level, such as tributary catchments to the macro level namely a river basin, such as the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB). These scale categories are further illustrated by an example from the region in the LMB.

	<p>All the land contributing water to a river system; from the headwaters to the river mouth.</p> <p>Macro-level: Regional, National, International</p>
	<p>The land contributing water to a tributary of the river system, thus the river basin may consist of several watersheds.</p> <p>Meso-level: Sub-national</p>
	<p>A small area contributing water to a specific stream or to a specific feature (e.g. a reservoir).</p> <p>Micro-level: District, Communes</p>

What is watershed management all about?

The *water and land resources of the Lower Mekong Basin* support the livelihoods of 60 million people. The development and conservation of watersheds in this region, especially of their mountainous upland areas, are of critical importance to achieve the *sustainable development* of economic and social resources, whilst preserving the environment. It is essential to base the region's development on the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



Watershed Management is the coordinated, multi-stakeholder management of Forest, Land, Water and other Water related Resources within a watershed in order to maintain the watershed functions.

Why is Watershed Management so important?

To maintain a sufficient and quality water supply

To avoid erosion

To improve planning and reduce risk of floods and droughts

To be prepared for the impacts of climate change

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